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ABSTRACT

Calling for redoubled emphasis on the performative and political dimensions of rhetorical study, some scholars recommend an "activist turn" in rhetorical criticism. In the context of the study of social movements, an engaged and active stance can enable critics to become direct participants in the field of social action. The promise of a retooled, outward-oriented critical stance for the rhetorical study of social movements can best grow out of a learning process that places an emphasis on reflexivity, performativity, and transformative engagement with other actors. Collective rhetorical efforts to persuade others of the rightness of a given viewpoint not only impact the audience, but also can have important effects on the speakers themselves. Among various strategies rhetorical critics could undertake are: (1) they could intervene in the field of social action in an attempt to catalyze conversion of defensive collective struggles into full-blown new social movements; (2) they could counter a surging social movement by contributing inventional resources to establish institutions locked in dialectical enjoinment with movement protesters; and (3) they might enter the field of social action as a nonpartisan mediator seeking to unhinge a movement-establishment controversy at loggerheads. Through dialogue between agitator and analyst camps, students could reflect upon and build their intellectual identities; negotiate appropriate goals of action; and invent novel strategies for using rhetorical practice to transform selected political terrain. (Contains 16 notes and 34 references; a sample protest petition and a course description are appended.) (CR)

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Activist Communication Pedagogy and the Learning Curve of 'New Social Movements'

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Calling for a redoubled emphasis on the performative and political dimensions of rhetorical study, some scholars recommend an "activist turn" (Andersen 1993) in rhetorical criticism. The various suggested trajectories of such a turn range from the creation and pursuit of "opportunities for dialogue with alternative [non-academic] audiences," (Hollihan 1994, 233), to "taking our models and signifiers off the blackboard" (Farrell 1993, 156), to "enter[ing] the fray outside the Ivory Tower" (Andersen 1993, 249).

Eschewing the "view from nowhere" (Nagel 1986) academic standpoint, these scholars paint a picture of rhetorical criticism that reaches beyond specialized academic audiences to engage public audiences and contribute to "broader social dialogues" (Hollihan 1994, 234). In the context of the study of social movements, this engaged and active stance can enable critics to constructively position themselves as direct participants the field of social action.

This critical repositioning represents a promising response to a perennial problem in rhetorical study of social movements: the difficulty in locating essentially rhetorical features of movement activity.[1] For decades, rhetoricians have struggled to isolate the uniquely rhetorical aspects of social movement discourse as a way of justifying their late *ouvre* into a long-running dialogue among sociologists, historians and political scientists. Some have taken this issue of rhetorical uniqueness as a sort of litmus test for the relevance of rhetorical criticism to academic analysis of social movements (see e.g. Cathcart 1972). However, behind this generic litmus test there lurks a different,

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[1] Zarefsky identifies "theoretical" work in social movement studies as ones in which "the scholar seeks to make generalizable claims about patterns of persuasion characteristic of social movements as a class" (1980, 245). This theoretical approach, motivated by the vision of establishing a distinctive rhetorical genre of social movement rhetoric, can be seen in Griffin 1952, Cathcart 1972, and Simons, Mechling, and Shreier 1984. These efforts fall short of the establishment of social movement genre of rhetoric, according to Zarefsky, because they are not able to demonstrate essential rhetorical differences between social movements and other instances of collective action such as political campaigns and government publicity initiatives.

possibly more salient question of disciplinary relevance: where is the social movement in rhetorical criticism?

Traditional "historical" criticisms of social movements in our field have largely deferred this question.[2] Instead of active intervention, these efforts have sought to add depth to historical accounts of social change by retrospectively illuminating the rhetorical dimensions of past social movement activity. As purely academic exercises, these efforts have been undertaken on a plane removed from the actual level of social movement mobilization. An activist turn in social movement criticism would seek to directly connect scholarship to society, opening up extra-academic channels for direct intervention into the field of social movement action.

In this piece, I suggest that the promise of a retooled, outward-oriented critical stance for the rhetorical study of social movements can best grow out of a learning process that places an emphasis on reflexivity, performativity, and transformative engagement with other actors. While this process can be enriched by appropriation of the theoretical terms and concepts already developed in rhetorical scholarship dealing with social movements, it can also benefit greatly from work in other fields that has already jumped the wall of the Ivory Tower. In the interest of pursuing this emergent form of pedagogy in the discipline of rhetoric, I will discuss the importance of Cathcart's theory of "dialectical enjoinment" and Gregg's theory of the "ego-function" of protest rhetoric in social movement criticism (part one), suggest Touraine's "action sociology" as a promising theoretical exemplar for activist rhetorical criticism (part two), highlight the pedagogical mechanisms of "new social movement" mobilization (part three), and finally explore how the similar learning curves of activist rhetorical criticism and new social movement mobilization may point the way toward promising strategies of academic engagement (part four).

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[2] For early examples of such retrospective criticism, see Andrews 1973 and Lucas 1976.

Dialectical Enjoinment, Counter-Rhetoric and the Ego Function of Collective Protest

When Griffin called for heightened attention to social movements as rhetorical phenomena (1952), he fruitfully expanded the field of rhetorical criticism beyond its single-text, public address orientation and sparked a host of new critical possibilities. Some of these possibilities were realized in the work on social movements that immediately followed in Griffin's wake. But by the mid-1980s, skeptics contended the rhetorical study of social movements was bogged down in questions of generic definition, with the hopeless search for a unique genre of rhetoric called "social movement protest" crowding out more useful theoretical work (see Zarefsky 1980).

However, this skepticism should not obscure the fact that these early works contained some incisive and valuable insights that should not be thrown out with the genre bath water. For example, Cathcart's concepts of "dialectical enjoinment" and "counter rhetoric" provide useful accounts of the symbolic dimension of social movement activity, and Gregg's explanation of the identity-constitutive function of movement rhetoric and establishment counter-rhetoric gives an illuminating perspective on the interplay between politics and identity formation in social movement protest. By considering each of these concepts in more detail, it will be possible to retrieve aspects of early rhetorical theory that can productively inform contemporary rhetorical study of social movements.

Cathcart suggests that it is not possible to effectively evaluate social movements outside the context of their "dialectical enjoinment" (1972, 87) with establishment interlocutors. The element that *makes* a social movement, according to Cathcart, is the "reciprocating act" of the establishment in providing a response to the movement's symbolic challenge to the existing order. Through the examples of the abolition and women's suffrage movements, Cathcart illustrates how

the dialectical interplay between movement and establishment is the rhetorical *sine qua non* of social movement activity.

> The essential attribute here is the creation of a *dialectical tension growing out of moral conflict*. It is not the alienation of an out-group alone that produces a movement, for there is always alienation and dissatisfaction in any social order. Rather, it is the formulation of a rhetoric proclaiming that the new order, the more perfect order, the desired order, cannot come about through the established agencies of change, and this, in turn, produces a counter-rhetoric that exposes the agitators as anarchists or devils of destruction. For example, the abolition *movement* began, not when individuals became aggrieved over the fact of slavery, but when, perceiving that slavery would never be abolished under the Constitution, they *demanded* the release of all slaves, *and* when the spokesmen of the established order *responded* in turn that the abolitionists' real desire was to destroy the system of private property and free enterprise. The women's sufferage *movement* began when women, perceiving that they would never get the vote through the evolution of the existing order, *demanded* the ballot, *and* when most men, and a few women, *responded* in their turn that the suffragists' real purpose was to destroy the family and defy the laws of God (Cathcart 1972, 87-8, emphasis in original).

Foregrounding the interplay between movement rhetoric and establishment response, Cathcart offers a fruitful and nuanced perspective on social movement rhetoric. This approach highlights the fact that social movement discourse is not a unitary textual phenomenon, but is instead an inter-textual dynamic emerging out of confrontations similar to what Goodnight has termed "public controversies."[3] In looking for the elements of controversy embedded in movement-establishment enjoinments, rhetorical scholars may discover important and unique insights.

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[3] Goodnight's theory of controversy provides analytical depth to Cathcart's notion of dialectical enjoinment. According to Goodnight, controversy develops when interlocutors engage in argumentation over "the taken-for-granted relationships between communication and reasoning" (1991, 5). "When unspoken rules and tacit presumptions are put up for discussion through clashes among members of institutions, interest groups, fields, communities, and publics, there are new opportunities and obligations to learn, to decide, and to argue" (1991, 6).

Collective rhetorical efforts to persuade others of the rightness of a given viewpoint not only impact the audience; such efforts can also have important effects on the speakers themselves. Through social movement struggle, rhetors form and express a shared sense of identity. Gregg suggests that this "ego-function" of rhetoric is a particularly important and revealing aspect of social movement activity (1971).

Working through the examples of the black power, student, and women's liberation movements, Gregg elucidates the process in which social movement actors develop distinctive notions of self-hood during the act of collective protest. In the case of black power, the foil of a demonized "Whitey" served as a symbol of the negative aspects of black identity which needed to be exorcised. For the student movement, sterile and bureaucratic idealizations of "the system" and "the power structure" served as constructs which grounded the students' own feelings as victims of oppression. Similarly, women's liberation activists built a common identification by challenging prevailing stereotypes of the "typical, domiciled woman" (Gregg 1971, 80).[4]

These negative foils not only served as rallying points which spurred each of these respective movements to strategic success; they also provided important reference points for the development of shared notions of group identity. "By painting the enemy in dark hued imagery of vice, corruption, evil, and weakness, one may more easily convince himself of his own superior virtue and thereby gain a symbolic victory of ego-enhancement," argues Gregg. "The rhetoric of attack becomes at the same time a rhetoric of ego-building, and the very act of assuming such a rhetorical stance becomes self-persuasive and confirmatory" (1971, 82).

While Gregg's theory of the ego-function of protest rhetoric has significant limitations,[5] it nevertheless underscores the

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[4] For a panoramic application of Gregg's theory to a wide range of social movements, see Stewart 1991.

[5] With a nearly exclusive emphasis on the importance of demonization of the other as an identity-formation mechanism in social movements, Gregg glosses

thinness of a rhetorical study of social movements that assesses movement discourse only from the perspective of its relation to the fulfillment of the movement's institutional agenda, achieved through pragmatic resource mobilization and rational public argumentation. Thicker descriptions must necessarily include an account of the identity-building function of collective protest.

Action sociology as exemplar

One missing element of early rhetorical study of social movements is the reflexive application of theoretical tenets to rhetorical critics themselves. For example, one might wonder about the ego-function of Gregg's own rhetoric, i.e. how did the expression of his ideas through a journal article generate and shape his own sense of self-identity? Or in a similarly reflexive light, one might ponder the ways in which Cathcart's journal article affected the character of dialectical enjoinments between social movements and established orders that were unfolding at the time of publication. The lurking question returns: where is the social movement in this kind of rhetorical criticism?

If the act of criticism remains confined to publication in specialized academic journals, the answer to this question will very often be that there is no significant social movement in the act of rhetorical criticism at all. By deferring the issue of reflexivity, critics default to the position of detached interpreters of texts, situating themselves as purely academic actors who "must alienate [themselves] from the obvious social context and impact of the rhetorical and critical act. The result

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over the possibility that collective identity can be constituted in positive, more constructive ways [e.g. aesthetic performance (AIDS quilt) or collective sacrifice for achievement of instrumental goals (Habitat for Humanity)]. Also, by attributing a basically monolithic and static collective identity to each of the movements he scrutinizes, Gregg overlooks the subtlety of multidimensional individual identities as well as the possibility that some movement adherents will choose to eschew and/or oppose certain identity constructions (see Butler 1990). For a conceptualization of how this contingent identity structure can uniquely enable progressive political action, see Wiley 1994.

has been a criticism that seems sterile" (Klumpp and Hollihan 1989, 92).[6]

Alain Touraine has developed a sociological method for the study of social movements that places this issue of reflexivity front and center. We should "invent a method for the study of social movements," suggests Touraine, "by abandoning the representation of society as a body of functions and rules, techniques and responses to environmental demands, and by replacing it with the image of a society working upon itself ..." (1978/1981, 141-142).

Occupying an important site in society, Touraine suggests that academic scholars enjoy unique opportunities to act upon their own self-identities and to alter the tenor of social struggle in society.[7] Building on this reflexive awareness, Touraine prescribes an engaged method of research in which the first requirement "is to enter into a relationship with the social movement itself. We cannot remain contented merely with studying actions or thoughts; we must come face to face with the social movement" (1978/1981, 142).

Once engaged in this manner, Touraine suggests that the "purpose of this research work is to *contribute to development of social movements* ... Our real objective is to enable a society to live at the highest possible level of historical action instead of blindly passing through crises and conflicts" (1978/1981, 149, emphasis in original). Achieving this objective requires a successful "conversion" of the status of collective action from

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[6] "It would be hard to write an ideological critique of Operation Desert Storm, the Federal budget deficit, or the politics of logging, and not feel a need to do more than produce a scholarly article. If, armed with key insights into political doublespeak, establishment rhetoric, or movement brainwashing, we engage in such criticism only in scholarly outlets, we would be accused correctly of hiding in the Ivory Tower" (Andersen 1993, 248-9).

[7] "Students can now play an important role because the sharp rise in their number and the increased duration of studies have resulted in the constitution of student collectivities with their own space, capable of opposing the resistance of their own culture and of their personal concerns to the space of the large organizations that seek to impose themselves even more directly upon them" (Touraine 1984/1988, 120).

"struggle" to "new social movement" (Touraine 1984/1988, 95-97). Whereas mere struggle represents reactive and defensive crisis measures undertaken by collectivities facing immediate threats to their basic needs, social movement activity involves collective "counter-offensive" efforts that seek to fundamentally restructure power relations and communicative norms and practices in postindustrial society.

In the case of French anti-nuclear protest, citizens engaged in scattered and isolated attempts to block the construction of nuclear power plants in their local communities in the mid 1970s. Motivated by fear of genetic damage and catastrophic accident, these groups initiated defensive, reactive struggles to protect their basic needs. However, the limited "not in my backyard" *telos* of these sorts of anti-nuclear struggles sharply circumscribed the capability of the activists to elevate their action to the level of a social movement. After the French government successfully overpowered each isolated protest, pockets of anti-nuclear opposition would evaporate as citizens resigned to accept the introduction of plants into their lifeworlds.

Sensing that the collective action of the anti-nuclear protesters carried the latent but untapped energy of a social movement,[8] Touraine and his colleagues intervened into the field of social action from 1976 to 1979. They sought to convert the scattered anti-nuclear struggles into a broader collective challenge to technocratic domination in society, by clarifying the more fundamental stakes involved in protest against nuclear power plant construction, such as the character of national energy policy, the transparency of nuclear decision-making, and the hegemonic concentration of power in the hands of a strictly

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[8] Touraine justifies his selection of the anti-nuclear protest as a site for sociological intervention with the following observation: "In our search amongst the social struggles of today for that social movement and conflict which might tomorrow take over the central role played by the working-class movement and the labour conflicts of industrial society, we look to the anti-nuclear struggle to be the one most highly charged with social movement and

hierarchical and centralized authority charged with administering the state nuclear power program (Touraine 1980/1983, 1-13). "It is true that the anti-nuclear struggle sometimes hesitates to make the transition," Touraine reflected, "that it still sometimes calls for an uprising against the specific dangers of nuclear power, but, as we know, these campaigns in the name of danger and fear are dying out and the struggle is learning to name its real adversary: not nuclear energy or plutonium but the *nuclear policy* and the *technocratic power* which decides it" (1980/1983, 194, emphasis in original).

Touraine's intervention was carried out by two distinct groups of sociologists who established connections with anti-nuclear protest groups including RAT (Network of the Friends of the Earth), GSIEN (Grouping of Scientists for Information on Nuclear Energy), CFDT (a trade union), the Gazette Nucleaire (a leftist newspaper) and militant students from the Malville Committee in Grenoble (Touraine 1980/1983, 11). The two camps of sociologists deliberately adopted different orientations toward this protest network. On the one hand, the "agitator" group moved into close direct contact with the protesters and helped to "prepare the confrontations, conduct the [intervention] sessions, and above all help the group by 'agitating' it, i.e. by pressing it to define its positions clearly, by pushing it to the limit in its discussions, and by reintroducing certain of the group's earlier statements or reactions" (Touraine 1978/1981, 192-3). On the other hand, the "analyst" group operated at a more abstract and removed level, seeking to "criticize the struggle," i.e. to utilize relentless theoretical reflection to rethink and reformulate the cultural stakes of the struggle and develop appropriate strategies of conversion to be carried out by the agitator group (Touraine 1978/1981, 193).[9]

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protest and most directly productive of a counter-model of society" (1980/1983, 3).

[9] One example of a strategy developed by the analyst group was the drafting and circulation of a national petition calling for public debate on the

By entering into a heuristic, ongoing discourse with collective actors already situated in fields of conflictual social action, Touraine argues that academic intellectuals have the capacity to contribute to the positive evolution of "programmed," postindustrial society (1984/1988, 140-153). This contribution is made by following a method that involves a "to-ing and fro-ing between analysis and action" (Touraine 1978/1981, 155), as the agitator and analyst groups engage in a three-way conversation with protesters.

Like Andersen, Touraine has breathed life into his methodological theorizing by directly entering the field of social action on multiple occasions. Practicing "sociological intervention," he has engaged, analyzed, and participated not only in the French anti-nuclear protest, but also intervened in the French student uprising in the late 1960s (Touraine 1971), as well as the Solidarity movement in Poland in the early 1980s (Touraine 1983/1984). Striving to elevate each of these struggles to the highest level of social movement,[10] Touraine aimed to energize the protesters' identity as social actors, as well as to elucidate and thematize the broader historical stakes implicated in each struggle.

Commenting on the recent English translation of Touraine's book Return of the Actor, Stanley Aronowitz suggested that wide dissemination of Touraine's methodology should be undertaken, given the present need for clear voices in the academy to enrich the simmering discussion about the political and social role of intellectuals in society. "The appearance in English of Return of the Actor can contribute to the revival of American social

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nuclear power question. This document provides a useful working illustration of Touraine's strategy of naming the broader cultural and social stakes under contestation as a device to facilitate conversion from struggle to social movement. See Appendix 1.

[10] Touraine offers the following definition of social movement: "A social movement is a conflictual action through which cultural orientations, a field of historicity, are transformed into forms of social organization defined by general cultural norms and by relations of social domination" (1984/1988, 66).

theory," wrote Aronowitz, "since it comes at a time when the question of historical agency remains one of the massive conundra of social sciences that have either denied its existence or desperately clung to older essentialist models" (1984/1988, viii). Waves of proposals for ideological and activist turns in the discipline of rhetoric signal that in this field, the issue of the proper political status of criticism continues to be a an important concern as well as a salient topic of discussion. Through examination of Touraine's method of action sociology, rhetorical critics might garner important insights about new ways to realize their own agency and position themselves vis-a-vis other social actors in a fashion that maximizes the transformative potential of their intellectual work.

How new social movements learn

Early study of social movements in the field of rhetoric exhibited a preoccupation with issues of generic definition and classification. Today, a variant of this preoccupation appears to have resurfaced in other fields in the form of a theoretical debate over the posited evolution of a new generic type of social movement, the "new social movement."

The defining feature of "new social movements" is said to be a dialectical "dual orientation," where the differentiated, yet complementary tasks of local, grass-roots consciousness raising and offensive institutional political action are both included in the movement agenda and operate hand-in-hand to spur multi-level progressive social change in public and private spheres (Habermas 1996, 370; Cohen and Arato 1992, 549-550; Felski 1989, 167-168; Cohen 1985).[11]

Many cite the feminist movement as the prototypical new social movement, in which local efforts such as grass-roots

[11] This new form of movement is juxtaposed against the old labor movements, which sought to press for incremental gains (such as wage increases) through institutionalized channels such as collective bargaining. For a skeptical view

consciousness-raising not only jibe with, but reinforce more traditional forms of collective action such as institutional lobbying. "The dual logic of feminist politics thus involves a communicative discursive politics of identity and influence that targets civil and political society and an organized, strategically rational politics of inclusion and reform that is aimed at political and economic institutions," explain Cohen and Arato; "Indeed, almost all major analyses of the feminist movement (in the United States and Europe) have shown the existence and importance of dualistic politics" (1992, 550)

Feminist activists seek material gains on institutional levels, (e.g. equal wages from employers, legislative protections against various other forms gender discrimination, more state support for child care),[12] but also complement these strategies with more localized efforts in non-institutional contexts to share and shape their identities through grass-roots consciousness-raising and reverse the tide of informal social discrimination through face-to-face persuasion. It is the interplay between these two levels of movement activity which typifies the new social movement approach. By making impressive appearances in the public realm, feminists build respect and gain confidence as they push for inclusion and reform of patriarchal institutions. The positive collective identity emerging from these joint efforts is in turn put to use in private contexts, where individuals locally challenge informal patriarchal attitudes and discursive formations that are sedimented in the fabric of the lifeworld.

As public mobilization builds collective identity, grassroots identity politics lends momentum to public mobilization. In discussing the feminist movement's striking record of legislative

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on the uniqueness of new social movements as a novel type of collective action, see Plotke 1995.

[12] "There can be no question that the dualistic strategy of the contemporary women's movement has had successes in political, cultural and institutional terms. In 1972 alone, the U.S. Congress passed more legislation to further women's rights than had the previous ten legislatures combined. Women's

victory in the 1970s, Cohen and Arato observe that "these political and legal successes had as their prerequisite and precondition success in the cultural sense--in the prior spread of feminist consciousness" (1992, 552-3).

In the synergy of this brand of "Janus faced politics" (Habermas 1996, 370), the new social movements develop momentum to push for social change at multiple levels in society. Interestingly, Cohen and Arato account for this synergy by explaining the interaction between modes of movement action as a *learning process*, a kind of *collective critical pedagogy*. In contrast to a "stage model" that charts movement evolution on a linear path from grassroots consciousness-raising to mass institutional lobbying, they suggest that new social movements "shift back and forth" between these two foci, and that this shifting triggers the important collective learning process that enables the movement to maintain a diverse repertoire of strategies, as well as adapt to shifting contingencies in the field of social action.

> It is a virtue of the stage model to have called attention to the fact that social movements target both civil and political society. The model is misleading, however, to the extent that it presents these orientations in either/or terms and describes the normal trajectory of collective action as a linear movement from civil to political society ... [The model] works with an overly simple *conception of learning*. Collective actors are assumed to learn only along the cognitive-instrumental dimension. That is, their learning is defined as a gradual recognition that identity-oriented, symbolic politics cannot help them to achieve their goals, and the result of this learning is a shift to a disciplined, hierarchical organization and an instrumental-strategic model of action. This point of view implies the notion that social movements cannot simultaneously concentrate on strategic requirements and identity building ... In opposition to this view, we believe ... [t]he newness of the new movements in this respect lies not so much in their dualism as in their more emphatic thematization of this dualism ... If conventional tools of government intervention are not

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movement organizations helped trigger a wave of legislative action on feminist issues unequaled in U.S. history" (Cohen and Arato 1992, 552).

> adequate to problems arising in such areas as gender and family relations, socialization and education practices, and biotechnology, then autonomous collective action focusing on consciousness raising, self-help, and local empowerment do involve learning after all (Cohen and Arato 1992, 560).

Roberto Michels' famous "Iron Law of Oligarchy" posits that all collective actors face the perennial dilemma that victories at the level of institutional politics often take on a Pyrrhic quality, as success leads to co-optation, bureaucratization, professionalization, and dilution of the original aims which motivated collective action (Michels 1915/1959, 388-392). This so-called "Michelsian dilemma" (see Cohen and Arato 1992, 557) was presupposed in the early rhetorical theories of social movements, which defined movement activity as *essentially* oppositional, so that inclusion of movement adherents into institutional structures would, by definition, bring an end to the movement.

However, in the critical collective pedagogy of the new social movements, Cohen and Arato see a promising answer to the Michelsian dilemma. By shifting back and forth between the terrain of political and civil society, the new movements invent modes of action which can be specifically tailored to address the risk of co-option, on one side, and the risk of marginalization, on the other (Cohen and Arato 1992, 561).

This process brings to mind the "to-ing and fro-ing" between agitation and analysis in Touraine's pedagogical method for the study of social movements. Just as the anchor of Touraine's approach to the study of social movements is the dialectical interplay between differentiated camps of sociological researchers, the key driver of the new social movements appears to be the pedagogical synergy that emerges out of a "Janus-faced" politics featuring differentiated modes of collective action. Indeed, new social movement actors (e.g. feminist, anti-nuclear activists) and academic action researchers (e.g. Touraine), appear to not only share, but crucially depend on a common learning curve for success.

This insight should be a cue to those interested in pursuing an activist turn in the rhetorical study of social movements that a central part of their task must be reorientation of rhetorical pedagogy. The activist turn is grounded in a view of the university as an important site for the stimulation of social change. But the institutional transformation of the university cannot be brought about through isolated acts of critical pedagogy, or by top-down administrative fiat. The pedagogical approach must itself spread throughout the institution to expand the ranks of intellectuals committed to actualizing the transformative potential of their work.

Conclusion:
Learning and acting

In order to discern and activate the latent social movement in rhetorical criticism, it would seem that one would need to embark on two interlocking projects: formation of an activist intellectual identity, on the one hand, and direct engagement in the field of social action, on the other. Borrowing from the strategic repertoire of the new social movements, activist rhetorical critics could chart a transformative learning curve by negotiating a productive interplay between these differentiated contexts of reflexive identity formation and direct engagement with the world.

Following this curve out into the world beyond the university setting, rhetorical scholars might begin to discover new senses of agency and purpose as they come to appreciate the radical contingency of social life. Interacting with more diverse audiences, scholars might experience a microcosmic local enactment of Cathcart's "dialectical enjoinment." The "counter-rhetoric" of outside interlocutors could spark the realization on the part of rhetorical scholars that in activist criticism, texts are not static but instead *speak back*. By responding in turn, critics could carry forth ongoing dialogues with living rhetors, with such

a dialogues serving to expand their own senses of intellectual identity and personal agency.

Just as Gregg suggested that social movement protest rhetoric has an important identity-constitutive "ego function" for movement rhetors, activist rhetorical criticism may serve a similar "ego function" for rhetorical critics. For example, in one of Andersen's courses that required activist engagement,[13] students reported that encounters with outside interlocutors significantly affected their intellectual identities. "Based on their reports," writes Andersen, "the vast majority of these students felt an incredible sense of empowerment, and most reported it was one of the most important experiences in their college education" (1993, 254).

If the activist turn in rhetorical study of social movements is to fully realize its critical and transformative potential, this process of intellectual identity formation should be open-ended. Students should feel free to invent novel identities and experiment with diverse modes of activist engagement.[14] Rather than finding and then stabilizing a fixed intellectual identity, Said suggests that what is needed is more of a commitment to perpetual self-reflection coupled with readiness for alert action. "The hardest aspect of being an intellectual," he writes, "is to represent what you profess through your work and your interventions, without hardening into an institution or a kind of automaton acting at the behest of a system or method" (Said 1994, 121).

In this final section, I propose several strategies for activist rhetorical criticism of social movements. Instead of laying out these strategies as part of a unified method, I offer

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[13] "This semester 130 students in my communication and politics class were required to spend 15 hours working on actual political campaigns and doing a brief report that constituted 20% of their grade" (Andersen 1993, 254).

[14] This approach would reflect the concern of feminist theorists such as Butler, who argue that a progressive feminist politics necessarily depends on the capability of actors to invent and adopt diverse identities to counter

them as modest contributions to an ongoing dialogue.[15] Growing out of a synthesis among the various interdisciplinary strands of theory explored earlier in this paper, these strategies are designed to maximize the transformative potential of the activist turn in rhetorical criticism, and to illuminate promising possibilities for engaged rhetorical practice in the context of social movement inquiry.

First, rhetorical critics could intervene in the field of social action in an attempt to catalyze, in Touraine's vocabulary, "conversion" of defensive collective struggles into full-blown new social movements. This was Touraine's approach in his encounter with the French anti-nuclear movement (1980/1983). Rhetorical scholars well-versed in Cathcart's theory of "dialectical enjoinment" would seem to be well-outfitted to carry out this strategy of engagement. After locating the highest level of "moral conflict" (Cathcart 1972, 87) between a movement and the established order, critics could enter into a dialogue with the movement to invent the most appropriate responses to the newly calibrated cultural or political stakes.

This strategy might contribute valuable inventional resources to movements caught in the horns of the Michelsian dilemma. For example, a movement faced with the prospect of dissolution following institutional success (the Pyrrhic victory) might be able to surmount Michels' Iron Law of Oligarchy by ratcheting up its *telos* to a higher level of confrontation with the established order.[16] Through such a maneuver, the movement could reinvent its

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essentialized notions of identity embedded in the discourse of mass consumer culture (1990). See also Spivak (1990); Hennessy (1993); and Haber (1994).

[15] Part of this dialogue will take place with undergraduate students at the University of Pittsburgh, in a Fall 1997 course on the rhetoric of social movements (see Appendix II).

[16] An example of this ratcheting process in action can be seen in the case of the *damnificado* protest in Guadalajara, Mexico. This protest which originally began as a defensive struggle sparked by a massive chemical plant accident, was converted into a social movement when activists ratcheted up their *telos* to challenge to the patronage system of the Mexican government, a key pillar in the centralized power of Mexico's one-party political system (see Shefner and Walton 1993, 611-622).

raison d'être and build fresh momentum to address new social conflicts.

A second strategy of activist rhetorical criticism in the social movement context might entail intervention to spark institutional counter-rhetoric. As a deliberate provocation, the act of rhetorical criticism could be designed to licit a response from the established order that would contribute to the social movement's learning process. For example, if the provoked institutional counter-rhetoric were to include strident condemnations of the protesters as illegitimate social actors, such a response might facilitate movement efforts to cultivate collective identity via opposition to the other (see Gregg 1971, 82). Or if the movement is threatened by marginalization and desires increased visibility or publicity, catalyzed institutional counter-rhetoric may afford the movement a certain degree of recognition and legitimacy. Rhetorical criticism in this second strategy would have a novel character; rather than an interpretive effort to elucidate the meaning of extant texts, the critical act would take the form of a performance designed to *produce* certain texts as the outgrowth of interaction.

A third strategy for activist rhetorical criticism of social movements might be to *counter* an surging social movement by contributing inventional resources to establishment institutions locked in dialectical enjoinment with movement protesters. There is no reason why the rhetorical critic necessarily needs to enter the field of social action on the side the movement; some critics may prefer to align themselves with institutions of the established order. Through such rhetorical engagement, interaction might serve the function of generating performative strategies for slowing movement momentum or removing movement concerns from the public agenda, thus preserving the *status quo*.

Fourth, the activist rhetorical critic might enter the field of social action as a nonpartisan mediator seeking to unhinge a movement-establishment controversy at loggerheads. By locating the *stasis* of the controversy and suggesting terms of debate that

might stimulate the development of more fluid argumentative stances on the part of movement and establishment interlocutors, rhetorical critics could intervene in the name of communicative action to spur needed discussion on salient public controversies.

Fifth, activist rhetorical criticism might attempt to instigate "social movement spillover," a phenomenon in which "the ideas, tactics, style, participants, and organizations of one movement often *spill over* its boundaries to affect other social movements" (Meyer and Whittier 1994, 277). The phenomenon of movement spillover can multiply the momentum behind progressive social change, as overlapping camps of activists pool inventional and material resources. Promoting spillover is at root a *rhetorical* endeavor, since it requires finding the most appropriate means of persuasion, and inventing the most effective strategy for translating these means into various movement languages.

> For scholars spillover effects are cause for greater analytical inclusivity of interactions among movements and for research determining: what factors make one set of issues most promising for political action at a given time; and what variables shape the degree of inter-movement influence. For activists, spillover effects are cause for greater optimism about movement survival and the scope of social movement influence (Meyer and Whittier 1994, 293).

To lessen co-option risks and maximize theoretical reflection, rhetorical critics undertaking social movement action research might do well to borrow Touraine's strategy of bifurcating the critical division of labor (into agitator and analyst categories). This would enable an exciting form of group research in which some students would concentrate on invention and public performance, while other students would engage in theoretical reflection further removed from the field of action. Through dialogue between the agitator and analyst camps, students could reflect upon and build their intellectual identities, negotiate appropriate goals of action, and invent novel strategies

for using rhetorical practice to transform selected political terrain.

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Appendix 1:

Draft of petition developed by coalition of French anti-nuclear protest groups, growing out of negotiations facilitated by Alain Touraine

June 25, 1979
Paris, France

NATIONAL PETITION

For a different energy policy

For a democratic debate on energy

I oppose the choice of the 'all-nuclear' programme made by the government.

I demand the raising of the secrecy which surrounds all the decisions on energy, the setting up of decentralised and independent channels of information, and the strengthening of safety measures for the workers and the population.

I maintain that to meet the crisis we need a new kind of development based on the needs of the workers and the people and on regional realities. We must impose a policy for the conservation of non-renewable resources, the use of all the unexploited resources in France, and a policy based on the large-scale development of the new energies. This alternative policy will ultimately lead to the creation of hundreds of thousands of new jobs.

I demand the setting up of an extensive and free public debate on the energy policy of our country, and that implies:

Democratic consultation and decision for the major energy choices at the national and regional level.

The suspension of the present electro-nuclear programme until the completion of the public debate.

Paris, 25 June 1979

Source: Alain Touraine. Anti-Nuclear Protest: The Opposition to Nuclear Energy in France. Tr. Peter Fawcett (London: Cambridge UP, 1980/1983): 168.

Appendix 2:

Course description:
"Special Topics: Social Movements"
University of Pittsbugh
Department of Communication and Rhetoric
Fall 1997
Gordon Mitchell

This course is designed to introduce students to the rhetorical dimensions of social movements by configuring the classroom as a public space. Community activists (including members of the Mon Valley Unemployed, Campus Coalition for Peace and Justice, the feminist movement, and ACT-UP) will be invited into the classroom so that discussion can be anchored in the lived experiences of "real-world" social movement actors. In turn, students will be invited to engage the public through *rhetorical intervention*, i.e. direct engagement with a "real-world" audience situated in particular fields of social movement action.

Tools for each of these modes of public engagement will be drawn from theoretical readings in a variety of fields, including rhetoric, sociology, and political science. Students' grasp of these theoretical tools will be strengthened with illustrative background readings that focus on the particular dynamics of individual social movements and show the concepts in action (including case studies of the French antinuclear movement, Mexican *damnificado* movement, and the American nuclear freeze and hazardous waste siting movements).

The three major objectives of the course are to highlight and examine: a) the function of rhetorical practice as a generator of collective identity in social movement mobilization, b) the rhetorical aspects of the perennial dilemma facing social movements, i.e. that institutional success leads to co-option evaporation of movement support, and c) the potential efficacy of students as rhetorical actors in the public realm.

While this course would appeal to communication undergraduates seeking to broaden their backgrounds in rhetorical theory, rhetorical criticism, and public argument, students in other fields such as political science and sociology may find the material directly relevant to their lines of inquiry. English composition and rhetorical process (CommRC 0310/7310) are required prerequisites.